DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 060 EA 031 806

TITLE	Principals of Change: What Principals Need To Lead Schools to Excellence.
INSTITUTION	National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, VA.
ISBN	ISBN-1-58434-042-8
PUB DATE	1999-10-00
NOTE	43p.; Cover title: "Principals of Change: What Education Leaders Need To Guide Schools to Excellence." The Report of the NASBE Study Group on School Leadership.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Association of State Boards of Education, 227 South Washington Street, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22314 ($12; plus 10% shipping and handling; $4 minimum). Tel: 703-684-4000; Tel: 800-220-5183 (Toll Free); Fax: 703-836-2313; Web site: http:/ /www.nasbe.org.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Principals; *School Administration; *State Action; *State Boards of Education

ABSTRACT

This report by the National Association of State Boards of Education Capitol Study Group on School Leadership proposes changes in the principalship. States need to define the qualities effective principals according to a set of standards and require evaluation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions defined in the standards. Policymakers must make hard decisions about accreditation that will indicate that poor quality will not tolerated. Targeted recruitment strategies are needed to attract high-quality candidates in hard-to-staff schools. States should consider providing high-quality alternative routes to the principalship. New principals should have a formal induction program. Targeted training and assistance to principals should be available throughout their careers. States need to include teacher-recruitment strategies to provide a supply of high-quality Support services and growth opportunities should be available to encourage excellent principals to remain in the field. The chapters' titles are as follows: (1) "Introduction: Good Principals Are More Important Than Ever"; "Building a Standards-Based Principalship"; (3) "Quality Candidates into the Principalship"; (4) "Building a Foundation for Quality: Principal Preparation and Professional Development"; (5) "Going Where the Jobs Are: Principal Distribution and the Politics of Equity"; and (6) "Principal Retention." Two appendices list principal proficiencies and skills. (Contains 23 references.) (RKJ)

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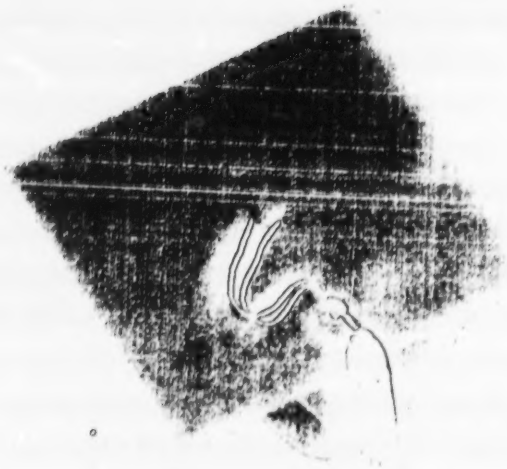

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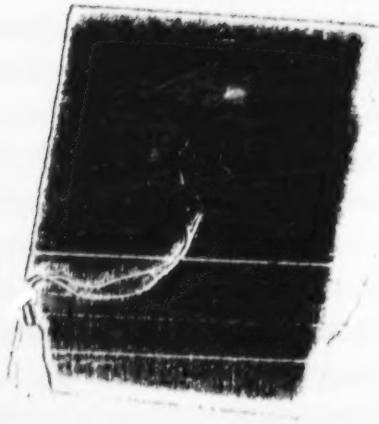

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Principals of Change:

What Education Leaders Need to Guide Schools to Excellence

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Principals of Change

What Principals Need to Lead Schools to Excellence

The Report of the NASBE Study Group on School Leadership

October 1999

National Association of State Boards of Education

NASBE Study Group on School Leadership

Ed Andrews (Maryland)
Mary Jane Caylor (Alabama)
Ann Dillman (New Jersey)
Sue Duff (Rhode Island)
Carol Gabbard (Kentucky)
Beverly Greenberg (Connecticut)
Susan Henshaw (Utah)
David Johnson (Board Executive, New York)
Marilyn McConachie (Illinois)
Richard Musemeche (Louisiana)
Mary Jean Montgomery (Iowa)
Jane Norwood, Chair (North Carolina)
Rick Rice (Indiana)
Grace Shore (Texas)
Russell Thompson (Missouri)
Gary Waters (Nevada)
Carol Wilson (Associate Member, New Jersey)
Martha Wise (Ohio)

Ex-officio Members

Fred Brown (National Association of Elementary School Principals)
Joe Schneider (American Association of School Administrators)
Tom Koerner (National Association of Secondary School Principals)

NASBE Staff

Jim Bogden
Don Dailey
Weaver Rogers
Carla Claycomb, author
David Kysilko, editor

Study Group Speakers

January Meeting:

Joe Murphy, Chair, Department of Educational Leadership, Vanderbilt University
Lillian Brinkley, Principal, Willard Model School, Norfolk, Virginia
Jim Watts, Vice President for State Services, Southern Regional Education Board

March Meeting:

Fred Brown, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
Richard (Dick) Flanery. National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
Barbara McCloud, Director, Superintendents Prepared Program of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)
Dave Johnson, Executive to the New York State Board of Regents

June Meeting:

Celeste Ferguson, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Urban and Teacher Education, Missouri Department of Education
Bruce Jones, Director, Center for Educational Policy Analysis, University of Missouri

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Summary Recommendations of the NASBE Study Group on School Leadership

- *Set Standards and Measure Results.*
  To ensure excellence among *all* principals, states need to define a clear picture of effective principals, contained in a set of standards, and require regular principal evaluation according to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions defined in the standards.

- *Enforce High Standards for Program Accreditation.*
  The Study Group believes strongly that if principal standards are to be effective, policymakers must make hard decisions about accreditation that send clear signals to all principal preparation programs that poor quality will not be tolerated.

- *Recruit Principals for Hard-to-Staff Schools.*
  States need to invest in targeted recruitment strategies that attract high-quality candidates to the principalship who are likely to work in hard-to-staff schools.

- *Provide Alternative Routes to Certification.*
  States should consider providing high-quality alternate routes to the principalship that may be independent of traditional university programs.

- *Provide Induction Programs.*
  States should devise systems to support new principals that include a formal induction program.

- *Augment and Target Professional Development.*
  The Study Group encourages policymakers to think beyond leadership academies and *ad hoc* professional development opportunities toward implementing an overall system of professional development that can provide targeted training and assistance to principals throughout their careers.

- *Link Recruitment of Principals to Recruitment of Teachers.*
  Because principals are usually recruited from among teachers, there is a direct link between recruiting high-quality candidates into teaching and having a pool of high-quality candidates for principal preparation programs. States need to include effective teacher recruitment strategies in any plan to improve the supply of high-quality principals.

- *Retain Current, Excellent Principals.*
  States should develop policies to improve the support, services, and growth opportunities available to principals in order to encourage excellent principals to remain in the field.

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I. Introduction: Good Principals Are More Important than Ever

Good principals are more important than ever. In a time of fast-paced and widesweeping change in schools, principals directly impact both the implementation and sustainability of reforms focused on improving student achievement. Good principals lead change, inspire students and staff, leverage resources to make improvement happen, and bring community members into the process of change. Studies consistently rank principals and teachers at the top of school variables that can impact student learning. The NASBE Study Group on School Leadership believes that policymakers must recognize school leaders as gatekeepers of change. To be specific, the Study Group believes that without well-qualified, motivated leaders in every school, reform will succeed sporadically and the goal of having all students in every school and district able to meet high standards will be threatened.

But while effective principals are the lynchpins of school improvement, a number of factors are now making the task of placing a high-quality principal in every school more challenging than ever. First, the job of the principal has changed, having become more complex and demanding. Second, good principals are scarce. As with the much-publicized teacher shortage, growing student populations, retirements, and decreasing numbers of applicants are creating significant shortages of qualified principals, especially in some regions and districts. Third, principal training, support, and professional development are largely inadequate and not up to the task of producing the supply of good principals we need. And finally, states have lacked a coherent vision and system for developing and retaining high-quality principals.

This chapter looks at each of these issues in more depth, and then provides an overview of what must be done to meet the challenges and ensure that every school has the opportunity to have a strong, well-qualified individual as its leader and principal.

1. The Principalship is Changing

The Study Group found that one of the underlying challenges in school leadership today is that principals' responsibilities are being continually and sometimes monumentally changed by the very reforms they are expected to implement. At the same time that principals are facing broad programmatic and organizational changes resulting from school reforms, these school leaders are contending with changing needs of diverse local communities, burgeoning student populations, and a shortage of up to two million teachers that will impact schools over the next decade. School principals now find that their job in 21st century schools will have little in common with their job in years past, and for many the skills and knowledge they bring to their job are woefully inadequate to meet their new responsibilities.

Previously, effective principals could simply be good managers, *maintaining* their schools rather than fundamentally *changing* them. Thus, principals generally kept buildings in good condition, ensured that instructional materials were available to teachers, administered budgets, dispensed discipline, collected and reported legally mandated information, and made sure that school operations adhered to local, state, and federal requirements. Today, however, states expect all principals to be much more than good managers. In the last few years alone, increases in the number decisions that are delegated from districts to schools, changes in the racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of students and communities, differences in the ways schools compete for students and public funds, and the increasing importance of attracting private funds to support school programming have all deeply altered principals' roles and responsibilities. Principals also are being held accountable, as never before, for bringing *all* students in their school to high academic standards. These changes require principals to be top-

notch instructional leaders and facilitators who can spearhead school improvement efforts and rally community support for new models of schooling.

Of course, many excellent principals have always spearheaded change, led school improvement, and expected academic achievement from all students. What is different now is the state's expectation that *all* principals accomplish what has previously been done by only a few. Building a system of policies and programs that clearly articulates these expectations, gives all principals the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to meet the standards, and intervenes when principals fail to meet them, is the challenge before state education policymakers.

2. Good Principals are Scarce

Given the importance of principals to school improvement efforts, it is clear that policymakers need to ensure that ample principals are available to lead these reforms. But principal shortages are real and growing, even as increasing numbers of principals are needed to serve the largest student population in history. About half of all districts and several states already report a shortage of qualified candidates for vacant positions (see Table 1). For example, Philadelphia superintendent David Hornbeck notes that in his district, an average of ten candidates apply for each principal vacancy, down from 40 in the 1970s, and individuals of high quality are scarce. Three-fourths of current school principals believe that a dwindling pool of applicants will make it extremely difficult to fill future openings in the principalship (Olson, 1999).

The situation is made more severe by the record number of current principals who are eligible to retire. Among K-8 administrators alone, 40 percent are expected to leave over the next decade. In New York state, 66 percent of school leaders are eligible to retire today, and 50 percent plan to retire in the next five years. In Boston, almost half of all principals have retired or resigned in the last five years (Daley, 1999). In general, fewer principals plan to remain principals until retirement and more principals are undecided about their plans to remain (see Chart 1).

Urban schools and those that serve poor children are hardest hit by the shortage. The disproportionate effect on these schools is in part because principals in urban and high-poverty schools are older than average and more likely to retire (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). But principals in urban and high poverty schools are also paid comparatively less than their suburban counterparts and generally have a harder job to do with fewer supports, higher rates of teacher turnover, a tighter budget, and more severe social concerns among students (Olson, 1999). As a consequence, recruitment is more challenging.

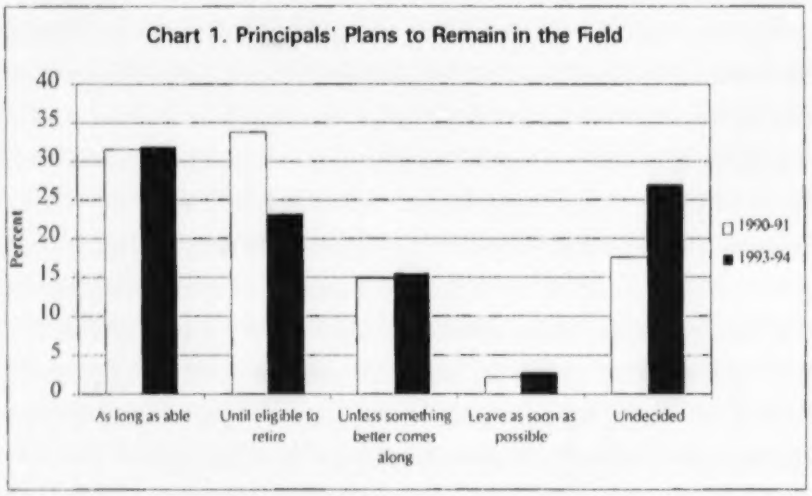
Over the last decade, states have invested considerable resources in addressing shortages of high-quality teachers, particularly in certain subject areas and in hard-to-staff rural and urban schools. But while efforts to resolve immediate shortages of high-quality teachers have taken center-stage in many states, the Study Group believes that issues in recruiting and retaining high-quality principals are potentially even more insidious than those in the teaching field, since progress in defining the shortage and devising effective remedies lags far behind that in the teaching field. With states raising expectations for student achievement and an increasing number of students arriving at school with critical nonaca-

Table 1. Superintendent's Perceptions of Principal Supply in their District, in percent

	Surplus	Shortage	Right Number
All Respondents	8	50	42
Rural	8	52	40
Suburban	8	45	47
Urban	7	47	46
Elementary	9	47	44
Jr/Middle	6	55	38
High	6	55	38

Source: Educational Research Service. (1998). *Is There a Shortage of Qualified Candidates for Openings in the Principalship?* Arlington, VA: Author.

demic needs, the "pivotal players are often absent, verging on retirement, or embittered about their jobs" (Olson, 1999). States that take their commitment to student achievement seriously need to invest in attracting and retaining high-quality individuals to careers in school leadership.



Attracting individuals to any career requires the rewards of the career to outweigh the frustrations. In fields where frustrations outweigh rewards, the predictable result is that many individuals opt to leave the job early, and few qualified candidates apply to take their places. This is the case in the field of the principalship, where the frustrations are real and growing and the rewards are comparatively scant. Evidence suggests that two of the primary reasons for the shortage of high-quality principals are the perceptions that principals are held to unrealistic expectations and that there is little reward in the job. Specifically, many principals contend with:

- *Inadequate pay for long hours.* Sixty percent of principals believe they are paid too little for the amount of work required to do their job well; among elementary principals, the average work week spans 54 hours (NAESP, 1998). When viewed from the standpoint of length of work year, level of education, and experience, current differences in pay between principals and teachers are small, and the salary gap between new principals and veteran teachers can be especially narrow.

- *Changing and escalating responsibilities that fractionalize time.* Most principals report that accumulating responsibilities have made their job unwieldy and have fractionalized their workday into so many small, discrete components that it is difficult to address any single responsibility well.

- *Dizzying changes in the definition and composition of the school community.* School communities are widening and becoming more diverse. The development of school councils and entrepreneurial systems of school competition bring business, parent, philanthropic, and other community interests to bear on principals in new ways. Also, principals report that increasing diversity in school communities has widened the scope and increased the complexity of their responsibilities (Portin, Shen, and Williams, 1998). Few principals feel well prepared to effectively support the cultural, racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity of their communities, much less the desires of diverse community sectors such as business, parents, and philanthropists.

- *Insufficient authority compared to responsibility.* Many principals are being held increasingly accountable for improving school quality and student achievement, often by highly punitive measures such as termination or school takeovers by states or districts. But principals have limited authority over many factors that impact school or student performance. For example, many state, district, and school council policies restrict principals' ability to hire their own staff, select instructional materials, or make independent decisions about student discipline—all factors that

clearly relate to school quality and student achievement.

The Study Group believes that evidence of mounting frustrations among practicing principals discourages potential candidates from entering the field. Restoring balance between the frustrations and rewards of a career in the principalship is a key role for state policymakers.

3. Principals Need Better Preparation and Support

Across the nation, principal preparation programs provide notoriously inadequate foundations upon which to build a career in the principalship. In the past, principal candidates often learned about leadership secondhand, through lectures from professors who had not entered a K-12 school in years. Candidates studied theory and policy in classes that were poorly related to one another from a curriculum that was fractured and rarely included reflective, hands-on experience that administrators themselves assert is a fundamental component of principal preparation. Candidates also learned to envision the principalship as a solitary, top-down, "command and control" management position. Furthermore, programs were often non-competitive and failed to adequately screen candidates for entrance. Unfortunately, this description is still apt today. Joseph Murphy, Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at Vanderbilt University, summarizes the list of problems commonly found in programs that prepare principals:

- Non-competitive entrance requirements and little effort to weed out poor candidates;
- An ill-defined knowledge base with few standards;
- Minimal academic rigor;
- A fragmented curriculum;
- Lack of connection to the world of practice;
- Uninspired instructional methods;
- Poorly regarded faculty;
- Lack or diversity in students and faculty;
- Reliance on an academic rather than professional model; and
- A part-time student body that is tired, distracted, and pressed for time (Smith & Piele, 1997).

Not only are principals often poorly prepared, but support systems for principals once they accept a position is sporadic in both amount and quality. New principals often receive little more than a brief orientation to their school and district. They are often isolated from their peers and receive little formative feedback concerning ways to improve their performance. Practicing principals also report difficulty finding time to attend professional development opportunities.

Although high-quality preparation programs can go a long way to providing the knowledge and skills candidates need to succeed, in the principalship there really is no substitute for experience. This is why it is important that principal preparation programs provide opportunities for extensive experience prior to licensure. Today, too many principals first starting their jobs feel "overwhelmed and underprepared and wonder if they had made a horrible mistake" (Smith and Piele, 1997, p. 88). Research points out several ways in which individuals' are overwhelmed during their first year as a principal (Smith and Piele, 1997).

- *Isolation.* Compared to teaching, principal positions are very isolated. Often principals have no peers in the school where they work, and the pressures and time constraints of learning their jobs make it nearly impossible for new principals to actively cultivate relationships with colleagues from other schools.

- *Technical and Logistic Problems.* New principals often spend considerable time simply trying to figure out the technical jargon of the job as manifest in state forms and required reports. When they are not mired in paperwork, they struggle to memorize mundane

logistics, such as pre-existing schedules, lunch systems, assembly routines and bus routes.

- *Getting to Know the Culture.* Many expectations and routines in schools are unstated, products of a particular culture that is neither explicit nor simple. Differences between district policy manuals and actual practice are commonplace, but new principals find it hard to learn these accepted modes of operating because of their isolation.

- *Lack of Feedback.* Feedback on performance for beginning principals is notoriously scant. As a result, beginning principals may lack confidence and have little chance for targeted improvement in their performance.

- *Being Atypical.* In a field that is perceived as a bastion of white males, individuals who are female or minority may feel inordinate pressure on the job because of a tendency for school districts to view individuals as representatives of groups and because members of their own group may expect them to publicly "carry the flag" for specific causes.

While some amount of trial and error is an inevitable part of learning a new job, the all-too-common laissez-faire approach to the transition from preparation to practice among principals makes the transition for many candidates more frustrating and less productive than need be. If the experience of new teachers is any indication, providing structured experiences for new principals during their first year or two on the job, in the form of mentorships and induction programs, may go a long way toward improving new principal performance and increasing retention.

Calls for improvements in principal preparation and support are ongoing, but this is particularly critical in today's education reform environment. Indeed, demands for fundamental improvements in principal preparation and support are linked directly to pressures for educational reform (Miklos, 1992). State policymakers need to be sure that preparation and support programs support principals and principal candidates as they develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that policymakers expect of them.

4. The Need for Coherence and Vision

Ironically, efforts to attract individuals to the principalship exist within a maze of unexamined requirements to enter the field and a plethora of conflicting responsibilities that render the job of principal less attractive to potential candidates. For example, policymakers are simultaneously trying to attract more candidates to the field and weed candidates out by establishing much more rigorous standards to enter and remain in the principalship. Most states require principal candidates to complete a university-based preparation program but have failed to ensure that the preparation programs offer curricula and experiences that help people become effective principals. Some states have espoused the need for long-term, systemic change in schools, yet they have implemented accountability systems that evaluate principals annually and expect consistent and substantial short-term school improvement.

The State Role in Creating a Reinvigorated Principalship. Just as states expect all students to achieve high standards, so states must expect high standards of school leaders and provide the support individuals need to meet them. Systemic reform of the principalship begins with ensuring that all principals have the knowledge, skills, and experience they need in order to create an environment that helps teachers teach and students learn. At the same time, while hiring principals is a local responsibility, the Study Group firmly believes that it is the responsibility of states to ensure that districts have a sufficient supply of high-quality candidates from which to select. In most states, state boards of education hold the key to principal quality in the form of setting accreditation, licensure, and continuing education requirements. States also are in a position to think creatively about incentives to attract and retain individuals in the field.

Finally, state policymakers can go a long way to streamline principals' responsibilities and ensure

that principals have the authority they need to lead school improvement. Specifically, state policymakers can help attract and retain high-quality principals to our nation's public schools in a number of ways:

Establish Consistent Standards that Speak to a Changing Field. Principals' success depends largely upon having a clearly defined set of expectations in terms of their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performance outcomes. It is incumbent upon state boards of education to establish relevant standards to direct principal preparation activities and create criteria upon which candidates and practicing principals can be meaningfully evaluated.

Enable High-Quality, Diverse Recruitment. Building a cadre of high-quality principals begins with strategies that recruit highly capable individuals into the field. Furthermore, despite calls from communities for diversity among school leaders, the principalship remains largely white, only English-speaking, and male. Consequently, state policymakers need to consider ways in which highly capable, diverse candidates that fit the needs of districts can be recruited into the principalship.

Improve Initial Preparation and Ongoing Professional Development. Principal preparation programs provide little in the way of practical skills that principals need on the job. Furthermore, practicing principals find that the preparation courses they took years ago have little to do with the current job of a school principal. State boards need to make sure that accreditation, certification, and continuing licensure requirements ensure that principals possess high levels of relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions—and can effectively apply these to their job.

Distribute High-Quality Principals across Districts. As with teachers, high-quality principals are not distributed evenly across schools and districts. Urban and rural high-poverty schools that urgently need good leadership find it very difficult to attract well-qualified principals.

Improve Retention and Reduce Mobility of Principals by Improving Working Conditions. The proportion of principals that intend to remain principals until they retire dropped precipitously between 1990 and 1993, from one-third to less than one-quarter (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Just as they have done to address teacher shortages, states need to develop innovative incentives for individuals to become and remain principals.

Improve the Consistency and Thoroughness of Data. While there are many anecdotes about shortages and low or inconsistent quality among principals, there has still been no systematic collection of information across states to delimit the crisis or to evaluate the effectiveness of proposed solutions. State policymakers need to ensure that they have a clear, accurate measure of principal supply, demand, and quality in order to inform their decisionmaking.

The good news is that states are not left to reinvent the wheel when it comes to devising effective policies and programs to recruit, develop, and retain high-quality principals. States have a host of effective programs already in place to attract and retain high-quality teachers. that can serve as blueprints for addressing the challenges we face in school leadership. However, there is much work to be done, both on the state policy level and locally within districts. The remainder of this report provides more details on the recommendations and action steps outlined above, pointing the way to a workforce of superior principals who can lead our schools into this era of high standards and high expectations.

II. Building a Standards-Based Principalship

Understanding that good principals are key to effective schools is growing among policymakers. It is little wonder, then, that more than a dozen states test aspiring principals and at least 40 require principals already on the job to undergo evaluations (Keller, 1998). Still, many of the policies that set expectations for principals are *ad hoc*, disjointed and sometimes contradictory, in large part because states do not have a clear, consistent definition of what principals need to know and be able to do. As a result, policies lose focus and states are left with little notion of how equipped their principals are to lead desired change in schools. Even in states where principals are accountable to school performance standards, principals often lack clear guidance about qualities in their own work that would foster the kind of schools envisioned by the standards. **To ensure excellence among *all* principals, states need to provide a clear picture of an effective principal, contained in a set of standards, and require principals to be evaluated regularly according to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions defined in the standards.**

Besides helping principals know what is expected of them, standards codify a state's commitment to parents, communities, teachers, and students to ensure that all principals are high-quality. Forming policy consensus around what constitutes principal competence is also the best way for principals themselves to ensure they, and the states that license them, fulfill their commitment to the public.

Setting standards, and devising systems of evaluation that make them stick, is also an effective way for states to send a message that outmoded approaches to the job of the principalship will not do. Principals who have managed to resist change and evade new responsibilities have little choice but to respond to a system that holds them clearly accountable for developing new knowledge, skills, and modes of operating. Furthermore, local school boards and superintendents are made accountable for hiring principal candidates based upon indicators of quality rather than, as anecdotes often assert, a candidate's years of service to the district or personal relationship with the superintendent or board president.

Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that establishing high standards to enter the principalship may actually attract *more* candidates to the field rather than fewer. States such as Connecticut that have set rigorous standards to become a teacher, and embedded these standards in systems of effective support, have found that interest in becoming a teacher is on the rise.

Defining Elements of Good Principalship

Devising principal standards requires policymakers to foster public consensus around the elements of effective principalship. Fortunately, researchers have amassed considerable evidence of what makes a good principal and professional associations have devised model standards based upon current research. One of the most promising sets of standards for school leaders has been devised by the the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). These standards, based upon current research and the best thinking of practitioners and policymakers, have been adopted by 30 states and are endorsed by almost a dozen of the nation's education associations (see box on page 12). ISLLC has also devised a licensure assessment for beginning school leaders that is based upon these. Both the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals have also devised comprehensive sets of principal competencies that closely parallel those of ISLLC (see Appendices A and B).

Standards for School Leaders

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)

Standard 1:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.**

Standard 2:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.**

Standard 3:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.**

Standard 4:

A school administrator os an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.**

Standard 5:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.**

Standard 6:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.**

The complete standards, available from ISLLC, include detailed lists of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that school leaders need to possess in order to meet each of the six standards.

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Whether states decide to adopt existing standards or devise their own, policymakers need to be aware of the rationale behind the content of existing standards and the general characteristics of effective principals. In general, research makes clear that effective principals:

- View teaching and learning as the main purpose of a school;
- Reach out to parents and community members and keep the public informed and engaged in school progress;
- Are able to work with people who have different and sometimes contradictory needs, diverse interests, and varying expectations;
- Believe that all students can learn and that it is their job to foster learning for all;
- Develop vision and school mission and communicate it to staff, parents, and students;
- Monitor their schools' adherence to legal and policy requirements;
- Foster rigorous yet attainable standards for teaching and learning;
- Provide clear, consistent goals and monitor student and teacher progress toward them;
- Spend time in classrooms and listen to teachers;
- Attract, evaluate, and support good staff and emphasize professional development; and
- Promote trust, sharing, and collaboration across the school community.

These elements of effective principals make clear the need for principals to be adept at several areas of management and leadership simultaneously. First and foremost, effective principals need to be able to lead, with clear vision, a learning community. Being an "instructional leader" requires principals to be *knee-deep in teaching and learning*, consistently ensuring that curriculum and instructional delivery support the school vision and adhere to state and local standards. New accountability mechanisms that require principals to evaluate teachers and be evaluated according to the learning outcomes of their students implicitly foster their roles as instructional leaders. But research indicates that being an instructional leader is a new, difficult, and commonly unmet challenge for principals, in large part because they have neither the requisite knowledge, skills, dispositions, nor time to do so (Leithwood, 1999).

Effective principals also know when to delegate responsibility and empower individuals across the school to demonstrate initiative. In general, the best school leaders are also those who encourage leadership in others. Although many school-based accountability systems hold principals accountable for top-down instructional leadership, research shows that in effective schools leadership behaviors are exhibited by several people including assistant principals, department heads, faculty of all ranks, and even students. This is termed *distributive leadership*. Distributive leadership is not in conflict with *instructional leadership*; on the contrary, it encourages principals to distribute aspects of instructional leadership responsibilities across the school.

Finally, in addition to being an instructional leader and encouraging distributing models of leadership, effective principals build high-quality community relations, oversee sound fiscal development, facilitate complex group decision-making, and implement effective management skills.

Devising standards that clearly articulate the importance of several kinds of leadership and management skills among principals, and providing support and incentives to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and dispositions, is an important responsibility of state policymakers. But, **while successful reforms depend upon principals succeeding at both management and leadership, currently, principals are adequately prepared for neither.**

In setting standards, the Study Group believes that policymakers need to send a strong message that teaching and learning are the focus of schools. When there is a statewide focus on learning and student achievement that is codified in standards and enforced with sanctions and rewards, princi-

pals will be compelled to maintain a focus on ambitious academic goals and foster a climate of learning and achievement for all students. But focusing standards upon teaching and learning does not mean that other aspects of the principal's job can be neglected. Rather, it means that activities that impede teaching and learning have no place in the principalship.

Because each state has a unique set of student standards and a unique accountability system, the Study Group believes that each state needs to decide individually the content and structure of its principal standards. Although developed individually, state standards should address the multifaceted responsibilities of principals and describe expectations for principals as both managers and leaders. They should also span the career development of a principal by including: 1) standards to measure the outcomes of principal preparation programs; 2) standards for the in-school performances of new principals and the collective performance of their school; 3) expectations for practicing principals that include high-quality, on-going professional development; and 4) expectations for professional development providers that include measuring and evaluating expected principal, student, teacher, and school outcomes.

Finally, the Study Group has learned that when building principal standards that are part of a coordinated education policy system, policymakers need to keep several things in mind:

- Principal standards need to be aligned with the entire standards system and be directly informed by state expectations for teachers, students, and schools.
- Standards take time to implement effectively. Particularly in comprehensive systems that address the content and format of preparation programs, the content and structure of professional development experiences, and on-the-job competencies that need to be developed by new and experienced principals, standards need time to take root and the results of standards need to be evaluated before they are significantly altered.
- Principal evaluation needs to span the career of a principal and be aligned with the expectations set forth in state standards.
- Setting high standards is only the beginning of a process that includes a strong state commitment to provide the support and resources principals need in order to meet the standards. Doing so may require states to reconsider the ways in which they currently allocate resources, since individuals, schools, and districts start at very different places and will likely need different inputs in order to achieve their goals.
- Setting high standards for principals and ascribing consequences need to be balanced against the state's desire to encourage innovation and risk-taking. In systems that are overly prescriptive or ascribe harsh penalties for implementing creative, research-based innovations that do not result in immediate improvements in student learning outcomes, policymakers may find that they stymie innovation.

State Policy Options: Building a Standards-Based Principalship

- *Develop standards that reflect the complete scope of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be good principals.* States need to consider the results of applicable research and the content of existing systems of principal standards in order to devise a comprehensive set of state standards that clearly defines the state's expectations of school principals and the programs that prepare them. These standards need to correspond with state expectations for teachers, students, and schools.

- *Foster a system for developing public consensus around standards.* States may consider ways to ensure that principals, teachers, researchers, parents, policymakers, and the community agree on the elements of good principalship. Inviting public participation in the development of standards is an effective way to build consensus.

- *Undertake formative and summative evaluation of principals.* In order to ensure that principals meet state standards, to help principals address areas in which they fail to meet standards, and to ascribe consequences to principals that consistently fail to meet standards, states should consider developing a comprehensive system of formative and summative principal evaluation that is based upon state standards.

- *Allocate resources to best impact the neediest principals' ability to meet standards.* Districts vary in their ability to support principal professional development to meet state standards. In order to ensure that all principals have the resources they need to meet high-standards, regardless of the district in which they work, states should consider targeting state professional development and technical assistance services to the principals who need them most.

- *Align accreditation and professional development with standards.* States may consider holding principal preparation programs and professional development providers responsible for their role in helping principals meet high standards by aligning accreditation requirements with principal standards and requiring programs to produce measurable outcomes that demonstrate their role in producing principals of high quality.

III. Recruiting High-Quality Candidates into the Principalship

Recruiting a pool of principals to meet the needs of every school is a complex task. Just as schools vary in their character, so do the challenges they face and their ability to recruit effective principals. Particularly at a time of shortage, schools in inner cities, rural areas, and those that serve poor students find it notoriously difficult to attract promising candidates. Yet rigorous efforts to recruit promising individuals into the principalship, particularly candidates interested in working in schools that need them most, have been noticeably absent from many state and district policy agendas. **In order to provide all schools with the tools they need to meet high standards, states need to invest in targeted recruitment strategies that attract high-quality candidates to the principalship, especially those who are likely to work in hard-to-staff schools.**

Currently, the most common source of principal candidates is teachers who self-select the field of school administration for graduate study. This laissez-faire system is not targeted and offers little ability to control candidates' quality, dispositions, likelihood to ever practice, or potential to work in schools that need them most. Candidates who self-select usually enter graduate programs in administration to fulfil their continuing education requirements for teacher certification.

There are several problems with relying upon self-selection instead of targeted recruitment to expand the principal pool.

- Education administration programs notoriously lack academic rigor, so candidates who self-select have little chance of being weeded out, regardless of their actual leadership potential, until after they have completed a graduate program (Smith and Piele, 1997).
- Many teachers self-select graduate study in administration, often at public expense, for reasons other than a desire to become a principal—such as the need to satisfy continuing education requirements in some field or the perceived leverage for hiring and promotion that a degree in administration conveys. Candidates who self-select into preparation programs are less likely to ever practice as principals. As result, as with teachers, the shortage among principals is not due to a lack of individuals holding the requisite qualification. On the contrary, there are more than enough licensed principals to fill administrative offices around the country.
- Relying upon self-selection has, for decades, provided a pool of principal candidates that prefers not to work in the schools that need them most. For example, given the option of being a teacher in a suburban school or a principal in an urban one, it appears that most choose to remain in teaching even after earning their administrative credential.

Not only has the longstanding system of self-selection done a poor job of filling vacant principal positions with high-quality candidates or providing a pool of principals for hard-to-staff schools, but it has failed to attract many minority candidates to the principalship. While the percent of minority principals rose between 1987–88 and 1993-94, principals remain overwhelmingly white (see Table 2). It is not surprising, then, that the field is full of calls for continued improvement in the recruitment of minority candidates into the field.

While the Study Group found no compelling evidence that recruitment of diverse candidates improves student achievement, it acknowledges that there may be other reasons districts seek diversity among principals. The fact of the matter is that in 35 percent of all districts, and 67 percent of urban districts,

increasing the number of minorities in school leadership has been an important issue (Educational Research Service, 1998). As a result, it is incumbent upon state and local policymakers to meet districts' needs by devising ways to recruit diverse candidates who meet high standards. This requires a movement away from self-selection toward targeted recruitment.

Targeted recruitment strategies that attract diverse candidates who can meet high standards and who are likely to work in schools that need them most may look very different from blanket strategies that aim simply to increase the number of principals or the common system of unchecked self-selection into the principalship. States have learned, by their experience in recruiting teachers for hard-to-staff schools, that targeted recruitment programs are diverse and thrive in flexible policy environments that hold programs accountable for the quality of their graduates rather than the processes or structures used to prepare them. Only by encouraging preparation programs to target and serve specific cohorts of potential principals are states able to address specific gaps in the pool of principal candidates. In other words, **states need to hold preparation programs accountable for outcomes—in terms of providing high-quality principals in schools that need them—rather than processes or structures.**

Table 2. Public School Principals, by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

Characteristics	1987-88		1993-1994	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sex				
Male	58,700	75.4	52,114	65.5
Female	19,190	24.6	27,505	34.5
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian	836	1.1	631	0.8
Asian	391	0.5	620	0.8
Black, non-Hispanic	6,655	8.5	8,018	10.1
White, non-Hispanic	67,460	86.6	67,081	84.2
Hispanic	3,548	3.3	3,269	4.1

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1997). *Public and Private School Principals in the United States.* Washington, DC: Author.

Helping Teachers into the Principalship

Classroom teachers are by far the single largest pool of candidates for the principalship; almost 99 percent of principals have experience as teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 1997), and many states require teaching experience in order to be licensed to practice as a principal. Having such a clearly delimited pool of potential candidates has both benefits and drawbacks. While targeted recruitment is easier when the candidate pool is clearly defined, the ease with which individuals can be recruited into the principalship is almost exclusively related to the perceived balance between the rewards and frustrations of teaching compared to administration. Currently, most teachers seem to believe that the balance favors remaining in teaching. Furthermore, since many policymakers also are struggling to resolve a growing shortage of teachers in their state, taking teachers from classrooms to fill administrative offices is at best a short-sighted solution.

The Study Group believes that **responsibly addressing the shortage of principals means doing so in tandem with teacher recruitment efforts.** Schools that find it hard to compete for high-quality teachers are also likely to find it hard to attract excellent candidates for the principalship, and recruiting teachers who are likely to work in hard-to-staff schools to fill principal positions leaves even larger holes in the teaching corps. NASBE's companion report, *The Numbers Game: Ensuring Quantity and Quality in the Teaching Work Force,* discusses ways in which states can address the shortage of teachers, particularly in urban and other hard-to-staff schools. The Study Group recommends that policymakers consider implementing targeted teacher recruitment and retention policies as part of their principal recruitment strategy.

In addition, there are several specific strategies to recruit high-quality teachers into the

Table 3. Superintendents Who Report that Their District Has an Aspiring Principals' Program, in percent

Type of School	Yes, have a program	No, do not have a program
All Respondents	27	73
Rural	22	78
Suburban	37	63
Urban	50	50

Source: Educational Research Service. (1998). *Is There a Shortage of Qualified Candidates for Openings in the Principalship?* Arlington, VA: Author.

principalship that the Study Group believes bear mentioning.

Tap on the Shoulder. Teachers are often encouraged to consider a career in the principalship through a "tap on the shoulder" from a practicing administrator. Unfortunately, principals tend to encourage teachers who resemble themselves in behavior, values, gender, race/ethnicity, and culture (Marshall and Kasten,1994); as a result, candidates who are recruited by practicing administrators are not likely to bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the principalship. Furthermore, because there are currently few minority principals, minority teachers appear less likely to be "tapped" (Murray, Husk and Simms, 1993.) Finally, it seems unlikely that the quality of principal candidates can be driven upward by a recruitment strategy of chance encouragement from individual principals to teachers.

The good news is that formalizing the proverbial "tap on the shoulder" may be an effective way to recruit high-quality candidates to the principalship. By encouraging practicing principals to nominate candidates, yet requiring these nominees to meet state-defined criteria before, during, and after preparing for the principalship, states may be able to continue to rely upon the "tap on the shoulder" as a first-line recruitment strategy for potential candidates. Furthermore, as practicing principals themselves internalize the standards to which they are accountable, they may become an even greater asset in the selection of promising principal candidates. States may consider ways in which they can help currently practicing principals develop the capacity to recognize among their staff the types of leadership and management potential called for by state principal standards.

"Home-grown" Recruitment and Aspiring Principals' Programs. Just over one-fourth of superintendents report that their district operates a program to encourage interested individuals to consider careers in the principalship or support them as they study for certification, often called "aspiring principals programs" (see Table 3). Like teachers, school districts believe that individuals who are recruited from the local community are more likely to remain in the district when they become principals. Thus, it is an ideal strategy to recruit individuals from hard-to-staff schools and districts and prepare them to become leaders in their own schools. The Study Group believes that strategies to recruit principal candidates from among local teachers are promising ways to fill vacancies with high-quality principals, but suggests that successful "home-grown" recruitment programs should adhere to several criteria:

- Since the quality of principal candidates in a local recruitment program is directly related to the quality of the local teaching pool, it is important that these programs be accompanied by local efforts to recruit high-quality teachers.
- Because of the potential for locally recruited candidates to adopt the *status quo* rather than challenge it, it is important that programs to recruit candidates locally, and the candidates themselves, be held to high, external standards.
- States need to recognize that districts vary considerably in their capacity to build high-quality local recruitment programs. States may need to provide technical and financial assistance to local recruitment programs to help them recognize and nurture a variety of leadership styles among principal recruits.

Incentive programs. One of the most promising ways to attract high-quality candidates to the principalship is to offer incentives for entering and completing a preparation program and accepting a position in a hard-to-staff school. Incentives have already proven successful in attracting teachers to hard-to-staff schools, particularly signing bonuses, home-buying grants or low interest mortgages, relocation expenses, college loan forgiveness, and tuition reimbursement. Some states and districts, have also implemented scholarship programs and systems to repay graduate student loans for individuals who earn their principal certification and practice as principals. But since many individuals in principal preparation programs already have some portion of their tuition paid by their school district under continuing education grants, the Study Group believes that states and districts should consider other creative incentives for entrance into the principalship. For example, many practicing teachers find it difficult to complete degrees on evenings and weekends and are unable to participate in extensive internship experiences because they are unable to take significant leave from work. Just as states fund scholarships for potential teacher candidates, so too may states find that teachers are motivated to study for the principalship if they are provided work release time, with pay, for study and internship activities.

Of course, providing paid release time to teachers who study for the principalship is costly. As a result, states need to closely monitor these types of incentive programs to ensure that candidates possess leadership potential at the time they are recruited, that candidates stay to the end of the program, and that, upon completion, candidates are highly likely to possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they will need to be successful principals. Furthermore, in exchange for the considerable investment involved in providing incentives to principal candidates, it is appropriate for states to require candidates to work as principals in a hard-to-serve school for several years. Finally, because incentive programs to attract principal candidates are new, states need to pursue research to define the best and most cost-effective programs to attract principals to schools that need them.

Recruitment from Outside the Teacher Pool

As noted earlier, virtually all principals have worked as teachers, and many states require such experience in order to be licensed. Even in states such as Michigan, where there is no process to certify school principals and local boards are free to hire anyone with any type of background, the results are generally unremarkable: the profile of

Recruiting Leaders Locally: The David Douglas School District

Faced with the realization that 40 percent of administrators in the district were eligible for retirement in the next three years, the David Douglas School District in Oregon developed a program to recruit potential leaders from among current district staff members. The result, Building Education Leaders Locally (BELL), is a multi-faceted program to develop leadership skills, build practical insight into district operations, and inspire staff to prepare to fill critical administrative vacancies.

The program, administered in collaboration with Portland State University's Administrative Studies Program, includes classes taught by both university faculty and current district administrators. Candidates also attend school board meetings and practice leadership skills in a variety of scenarios including resolving parent complaints and evaluating staff. After finishing their coursework, candidates complete an action research project and work with a mentor administrator as they begin working as administrators.

In its first year, 43 teachers and three classified staff participated in BELL. Of these, 75 percent are currently involved in school leadership roles.

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Early Retirement Incentives and the Problem of Principal Supply

Plans that offer financial incentives for experienced principals to retire early have grown in popularity among states and districts in recent years. Advocates of "buy-out" programs see them as a way to save money by diminishing the number of district employees at higher ends of the payscale. They also believe buy-outs can effectively get rid of "dead wood" among the principal corps—those who have lost their dynamism but who continue to work as principals largely because they have yet to reach their full retirement benefit.

Evidence shows that retirement incentive programs are likely to reduce immediate administrative salaries, but they also may involve considerable costs. When calculating the true costs of buy-out programs, policymakers need to consider investments required to recruit and train new, high-quality principals. Given current shortages, these investments could be considerable. In some districts, experienced principals have taken early retirement options only to be rehired by the same district as "consultants" because a suitable replacement candidate was not forthcoming.

The costs of retirement incentive programs may also be more than financial. Because principals' eligibility for participation in buy-outs is based upon experience, districts could lose high-quality experienced principals along with "dead wood." Policymakers need to consider the likelihood that they will attract a candidate of equal or greater quality to fill a position vacated as a result of a buy-out.

Rather than encourage experienced principals to retire, some states have started to encourage retired principals to return. In New York, for example, recent legislative changes allow districts that are officially declared "shortage areas" to rehire retirees without affecting their pensions. In response to predictions of principal shortages, Louisiana implemented an effective incentive to reduce retirement rates without affecting the retirement benefits of individuals.

principals in Michigan closely resembles that in other states, both in terms of knowledge and experience. But while recruiting from outside the field of education is rare, the Study Group feels that some individuals from other fields, with proper training and support, may be excellent candidates for the principalship. Indeed, the expertise of retired military officers, corporate executives, or leaders in other social service fields may be useful additions to the field of school leadership. Furthermore, in a true standards-based system, candidates need to be evaluated on their skills, knowledge, and dispositions rather than the process by which that ability was developed. In other words, basing a recruitment strategy upon outputs (as measured by *standards)* rather than inputs (such as experience and education) leaves the field open to entrants with non-traditional preparation experiences.

The Study Group believes strongly, however, that it is rare for a candidate from outside education to possess all the legal and pedagogical knowledge the principalship requires. Furthermore, it is imperative that the principal, as an *instructional leader*, be perceived by teachers as someone who is qualified to guide pedagogical improvements and evaluate teachers' according to knowledge and performance standards (see page 24 for more information on alternative routes to the principalship).

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State Policy Options: Recruiting High-Quality Candidates into the Principalship

- *Focus upon teacher recruitment as a foundation for effective principal recruitment.* Because principals are usually recruited from among practicing teachers, the quality of principals is directly related to the quality of individuals recruited into teaching. States may consider effective teacher recruitment strategies as one route to building an cadre of high-quality school leaders.

- *Infuse standards into local systems of principal recruitment.* Because most principal recruitment strategies are undertaken locally, states may consider providing technical assistance to districts to help them recognize leadership potential among their teachers and encourage promising candidates to begin training for the principalship.

- *Provide support for aspiring principals programs.* In an effort to encourage high-quality local recruitment efforts, states may consider providing technical assistance and financial support to districts and other agencies that sponsor effective aspiring principals programs.

- *Provide incentives for individuals who choose to become principals.* States may consider supporting tuition reimbursement, work-release time, or other incentives to encourage individuals to enter and remain in the principalship.

- *Provide support, particularly in the form of targeted preparation programs and high-quality mentoring, to new principals from outside the education field.* States that choose to allow individuals from outside the field of education to become principals may consider special types of education and support that these individuals need to meet high standards of practice.

- *Evaluate all recruitment and incentive programs for effectiveness and quality of candidates.* Little data currently exists concerning the effectiveness of particular recruitment and incentive programs in attracting high-quality candidates to the principalship. As a result, states that choose to undertake these types of programs should evaluate them for effectiveness and efficiency.

IV. Building a Foundation for Quality: Principal Preparation and Professional Development

One of the most important policy considerations for ensuring high-quality candidates for the principalship is building preparation programs that provide candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to meet state standards. Investing in high-quality principal preparation programs makes sense, because evidence clearly shows the linkages between high-quality principals, student performance, and productive, satisfied staff. Also, principals who are well-prepared for the challenges of the job are more likely to thrive and less likely to leave the field after only a short, frustrating experience. Overall, the preparation of principals matters.

But most school administrators have been trained in programs that are now both irrelevant and grossly inadequate for the current responsibilities of the principalship. As a consequence, it is virtually impossible for states to improve the overall quality of the principal pool without reorganizing and redirecting their university-based principal preparation programs. Particularly as states and districts expect more from principals in terms of their role in both management and leadership and their central position in accountability systems, high-quality preparation and professional development is critical. Furthermore, state insistence on uniformly high standards across schools and districts requires states to provide the resources principals need to perform. A keystone of these resources is preparation and professional development.

University-Based Principal Preparation Programs

As discussed earlier, principal preparation programs provide notoriously inadequate foundations upon which to build a career in the principalship. In general, they are criticized for being non-competitive, lacking in rigor, fragmented, and failing to provide the knowledge and skills that principals candidates need to succeed.

In many cases, addressing these shortcomings may require wholesale redesign of principal preparation programs to include new entrance criteria, new curricula, new scheduling, new faculty, and new types of clinical experience. In general, the Study Group has found that effective principal preparation programs are those that:

- *Are competitive.* Able to "hit the ground running" with highly motivated and intellectu-

North Carolina's Principal Fellows Program

In North Carolina, the General Assembly has funded a scholarship program for highly qualified individuals to become school principals. Principal Fellows receive $20,000 per year for two years of full-time study to complete the Master of School Administration degree at one of nine participating public universities. Candidates are selected based upon their academic merit and, upon completing the program, must be willing to practice as a full-time administrator in North Carolina for four years. Candidates who do not fulfill this requirement must repay their scholarship plus interest at an annual rate of 10 percent.

The Program began in 1994, and current funding of $3.6 million provides scholarships for 180 principal candidates. Of the 263 Fellows who have earned the Master of School Administration degree, 94 percent are employed as principals or assistant principals in North Carolina.

ally strong candidates, effective preparation programs screen candidates to ensure they have the potential to complete rigorous program requirements and demonstrate a sincere commitment to school leadership prior to beginning the program.

- *Develop philosophical and intellectual perspectives on the school system.* While practical experience is a critically important part of developing principal competence, principal candidates need to be able to analyze their experiences in the context of key theoretical and philosophical paradigms.
- *Bridge the gap between theory and practice.* High-quality preparation programs simultaneously give students theoretical frameworks and the opportunity to apply the frameworks in real-life situations with which they are familiar. One of the most effective ways to bridge the gap between theory and practice is with field-based experience throughout the preparation program that includes close collaboration between the preparation institution and the cooperating school district, as well as opportunities for reflection.
- *Implement innovative course schedules.* Traditional principal preparation courses take place after work, when candidates are tired and often uninspired. As a result, some innovative programs have found that courses on weekends and during the summer, paired with internships during the work day, can be more effective. An evaluation of one such program at the University of Oregon found that it produces candidates that have more favorable attitudes toward their preparation program, are more able to express their philosophy, have twice the average success rate of finding jobs in administration and perform well during their first year as principals (Schmuck, 1992).
- *Develop principals who go where they are needed.* High-quality programs also need to develop principals who meet the needs of districts. This implies that programs need to produce principals who are willing and able to effectively serve where they are most needed.

Bank Street's Principals' Institute

At Bank Street College of Education in New York City, the Principals' Institute is a highly competitive Master's program leading to New York State administrative certification.

Of about 100 applicants, who must be New York City teachers and complete a rigorous selection process, 25 to 30 students are chosen for each cohort. To ensure fairness, the selection process includes reviews of candidates by individuals who are unaffiliated with either Bank Street or New York Public Schools.

The Institute requires candidates to complete rigorous coursework that is led by both adacemic faculty and practicing New York City administrators. Candidates must also complete a full-time half-year internship. The program includes regular site visits to diverse schools across the city and guest speaker sessions that may include business leaders, representatives of community organizations, and New York City school board members. In addition, candidates must complete a final project in which they design their own schools. Some of these projects have led to the creation of new schools based upon candidates' blueprints.

Those accepted into the program attend tuition-free (all program costs are paid by the board of education and foundation). In exchange, program participants are committed to work in the city's schools that are under Regents' Review for low performance.

Started in 1989, the Institute has served about 400 students, 80 percent of whom have been placed in supervisory administrative positions in the city's public schools. The program has been so popular that individual districts have requested that the city-wide program be reproduced and made available to local, New York City districts. As a result, Bank Street began a district-based program, in which cohorts of candidates are selected from among teachers in one district. Although only in its second year, its outcomes are promising. In District 10 in the Bronx, for example, of 15 students in the cohort, 14 were offered administrative positions even prior to receiving their degree from Bank Street.

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- *Forge partnerships with school districts.* In programs where there are strong partnerships between the preparation institution and local school districts, the preparing institution often recruits practitioners to teach courses and serve as mentors and places candidates in local districts for internships. Districts can provide vital advice to preparation institutions about the content and structure of the program curriculum. In Washington and Wisconsin, for example, preparation programs must establish advisory councils that include practitioners.

- *Insist upon rigorous internships.* Carefully designed and closely supervised internships are a critically necessary component of any high-quality principal preparation program. These internships need to include time for reflection among peers in the preparation program.

State policymakers have the authority to direct the content and structure of principal preparation programs in at least two ways. First, policymakers can clearly define the critical components of effective preparation programs by including them in the system of state standards. Second, state policymakers need to hold programs to these high standards by devising evaluation criteria that correspond with the standards and making accreditation dependent upon performance. Finally, state boards need to recognize that responsibility for program quality rests squarely upon their shoulders; in most states they are responsible for setting and maintaining program accreditation criteria. These criteria may include, at the state's discretion, measures of program effectiveness in a) producing degree recipients who actually go on to practice as a principal in a public school; b) producing degree recipients who accept leadership positions in hard-to-staff schools; and c) producing degree recipients who become effective school leaders. **The Study Group believes strongly that setting standards, and making them stick, requires policymakers to make hard decisions about program accreditation and send clear signals to all preparation programs that poor quality will not be tolerated.**

Alternate Routes to Principal Certification

For the vast majority of principals, the route to certification still includes a traditional graduate degree from an accredited university. But if experience gained among teachers is any indication, opening routes to the principalship that do not include traditional graduate study at a university may alter the pool of candidates for the principalship in positive ways. Among teacher recruiters, alternate routes to certification that cater to mid-career changers have captured attention for several reasons:

- Individuals who choose to enter the field of education mid-career appear to be more likely to stay in the district where they are trained.
- Participants in alternate programs are usually older and more mature than graduates from traditional teacher preparation programs.
- There is some evidence that teachers from alternate routes may have less difficulty in classroom management than traditionally certified teachers (Houston, Marshall and McDavid, 1993).
- There is evidence that student achievement does not differ substantially according to the certification route of their teacher.
- In at least one local study, educators from alternate routes were more likely to have grown up in an urban environment, more likely to be bilingual, more likely to want to teach in an urban area, and more likely to want to teach disadvantaged students (Natriello and Zumwalt, 1993).

States should consider providing high-quality alternate routes to the principalship that may be independent of traditional university programs. Across the country, some states and districts are beginning to apply the flexibility inherent in alternate routes of teacher preparation to principal preparation programs. Philadelphia, for example, recently initiated the LEAD Program (Leadership in Education Apprentice Design) to prepare local teachers with leadership potential to be principals. The program requires candidates to complete two

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has adopted standards for recognition of graduate programs in education administration and leadership. Programs that are accredited by NCATE and would like to have their education leadership programs recognized need to demonstrate their adherence to nine criteria:

1. Curricula are designed in an integrated or problem-based mode to promote an understanding of the connectedness of the various knowledge and skill areas in educational leadership.
2. Programs include: (a) the acquisition of concepts and information; (b) the integration of concepts with practice and use of knowledge in context; and (c) the application of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a workplace environment.
3. Bridging experiences are conducted between course content and the workplace that feature clinical exercises and/or field settings.
4. Appropriate adult learning strategies are broadly utilized.
5. Instructional emphasis is placed on those methods and materials that anticipate learner performance in the workplace.
6. All candidates are required to have experiences in all eleven domains as well as an extensive internship that provides for a synthesis and application of appropriate knowledge, skills, and dispositions from the eleven domains.
7. Activities in various courses are adapted to the degree and level sought by each candidate.
8. Opportunities are provided for candidates to formulate and examine an ethical platform upon which to rely for tough decisions.
9. Assessment of the candidates is carried out through use of multiple sources of data, including performance assessments.

Programs must also provide evidence of meeting standards in five areas:

Strategic Leadership. The institution's program prepares school leaders who have the knowledge, skills and attributes to identify contexts, develop with others vision and purpose, utilize information, frame problems, exercise leadership processes to achieve common goals, and act ethically for educational communities.

Instructional Leadership. The institution's program prepares school leaders who have the knowledge, skills and attributes to design appropriate curricula and instructional programs, to develop learner centered school cultures, to assess outcomes, to provide student personnel services, and to plan with faculty professional deveopment activities aimed at improving instruction.

Organizational Leadership. The institution's program prepares school leaders who have the knowledge, skills and attributes to understand and improve the organization, implement operational plans, manage financial resources, and apply decentralized management processes and procedures.

Political and Community Leadership. The institution's program prepares schools leaders who have the knowledge, skills and attributes to act in accordance with legal provisions and statutory requirements, to apply regulatory standards, to develop and apply appropriate policies, to be conscious of ethical implications of policy initiatives and political actions, to relate public policy initiatives to student welfare, to understand schools as political systems, to involve citizens and service agencies, and to develop effective staff communications and public relations programs.

Internship. The institution's program places candidates in a workplace environment to synthesize knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The internship includes substantial responsibilities that increase over time in amount and complexity and that requires direct involvement with students, staff, parents and community leaders. Internships should be at least six months in duration and should be overseen by a mentor.

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six-week internships working with exemplary principals, an applied research projec,t and a performance assessment of leadership skills. While the program is new, it boasts sixteen graduates, and another 20 are currently enrolled.

In Texas, a half-dozen of the state's Education Service Centers offer an alternative certification program for principals. To enter the program candidates must have a master's degree (in any field), three years of leadership responsibility, two years of teaching experience, and approval from a district to work in an administrative position. Candidates participate in two years of field-based performance-oriented preparation (a minimum of 357 clock hours) that includes work with mentors, completion of a portfolio, and the design and implementation of action research projects in their home districts. The competencies developed in the program are based upon the state's principal standards. Although the program has only been operating for two years, program staff are evaluating the outcomes of the first cohort of candidates. Preliminary evidence suggests that the program has successfully prepared individuals of high quality.

In a coherent system of principal preparation that is based upon standards, alternate routes to certification can be an important mechanism to open the pipeline into the principalship to more candidates. The Study Group asserts, however, that it is important to distinguish between *alternate routes* and *alternate certification*. While the Study Group encourages state policymakers to consider new and innovative ways to prepare candidates to meet the standards for principalship, *i.e., alternate routes to becoming a principal*, it rejects the idea of creating different types of certification for individuals with different skills, experiences or levels of expertise, *i.e., alternate certification*. Taking standards seriously means holding everyone in the field to the same expectations, regardless of background or experience.

As a result, the Study Group strongly believes that extensive supports are necessary to help candidates from alternate routes become proficient in all aspects of the principalship. States that choose to permit non-traditional entrants into the field need to provide support and training that:

- Holds all candidates to the same high standards regardless of their route of entry;
- Includes close mentoring with an experienced school leader who can introduce the candidate to the complex culture of the school and district;
- Is sufficiently individualized to cover specific knowledge gaps that the candidate brings to the principalship; and
- Occurs prior to gaining authority over any teachers.

Principal Induction Programs

Although trial and error is an inevitable part of learning a new job, the all-too-common laissez-faire approach to the transition from preparation to practice among principals makes the transition for many candidates much more nerve-wracking than it need be.

States that take seriously their commitment to providing all principals with the tools they need to succeed should devise systems of new principal support that include a formal induction program. Induction programs through the first year or two of an individual's entrance into the principalship can go a long way toward easing the burdens of new entrants. Much like induction programs for teachers, principal induction programs usually include orientation on official and implicit policies and procedures, consistent contact with experienced principals as well as contact with other novice principals (often taking the form of a mentorship), time for new principals to reflect upon their work, and formative feedback on performance. In small districts, where there are few principals, states may consider fostering cooperative relationships among local districts to provide induction programs for principals.

Ongoing Professional Development

If most preparation programs have done a poor job of preparing candidates for the

principalship, most professional development opportunities have also done little to compensate for knowledge and performance gaps once principals are on the job. Even among well-prepared and high-performing principals, expertise doesn't last forever. "A profession is never mastered. Professionals grow older and face different life circumstances. Clients change. New research and technology appear. Social and political priorities are reordered" (Duke, 1993). Particularly in the current era of rapid reform, failure to provide targeted, on-going professional development to help principals adapt to their changing work environment stymies innovation.

The need for high-quality professional development is greater now than ever. Principals who have been poorly prepared in out-dated preparation programs and poorly inducted in programs that do little more than review district policies simply cannot lead breakneck reform in the way states now require them to. While revamping principal preparation programs can help incoming principals rise to high expectations, many currently practicing principals have few tools at their disposal to make the changes both in their job and in their school's culture, that states expect.

It is imperative for policymakers to understand that the job of initiating change does not stop once a set of standards or new program is put into effect. In fact, the process of change is only beginning. States that require principals to change their practice or hold principals to high standards of quality in terms of teacher, student, or their own performance have a clear responsibility to build capacity among principals to do the job set before them.

Building capacity to assume new leadership roles requires intensive, ongoing professional development that is targeted to the individual needs of principals and tailored to correspond with principal standards. Several states have implemented intensive "leadership academies" that usually serve teams of leaders from a district in a "retreat" format. In Kentucky, the Leadership Academy also includes, at the leaders' request,

Learning from Teacher Induction Programs

Research has defined several components of effective induction programs among new teachers. As states develop induction programs for school leaders, they may find it useful to consider what elements of teacher induction programs contribute to their success. Among teacher induction programs, the most successful share several characteristics:

- Effective programs acknowledge that beginning educators are not finished products.
- Effective induction focuses on providing support.
- Effective programs must include all new entrants to the field in a state or district.
- Effective induction programs involve experienced professionals as mentors and involve the entire school community in the process of cultivating good practice. In other words, good induction programs are also good professional development.
- Effective induction programs are based upon well-defined standards and include a mentor development system that continues through their time of service as mentors.
- Effective induction is supported by consistent, earmarked funding.
- Effective induction includes a process to meaningfully evaluate participants according to agreed-upon standards.
- Effective induction includes a process to measure its effectiveness.
- Effective induction programs span the first few years of an individual's career.
- Effective induction programs give participants the time and situations they need to learn most effectively, including reduced work loads, so participants have time to plan and to observe other professionals.

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visits to the local district from a trained "coach" who can provide highly targeted and intensive assistance to resolve particular leadership issues faced by participants. In another example, Illinois has teamed with Motorola University to provide their principals with state-of-the-art leadership training.

While leadership academies are a step in the right direction, particularly when they include intensive and targeted assistance, **the Study Group encourages policymakers to think beyond leadership academies and *ad hoc* professional development opportunities to an overall system of professional development that can provide targeted training and assistance to principals throughout their careers.** In such a system, principals' performance would need to be evaluated in relation to state standards. Individualized professional development plans would take into account not only each principal's strengths and weaknesses, but also the short- and long-term goals of the school community and the principal's personal goals for career growth. Principals' continuing evaluation would depend upon completing professional development in certain key areas and demonstrating their ability to apply what they have learned in their job. In this way, professional development extends beyond simple principal remediation to positively impact their school and their personal career growth.

Evaluation needs to span any good system of professional development, not only holding principals responsible for applying what they learn, but holding providers responsible for the quality of the professional development they provide. Kentucky has started evaluating teachers' professional development based upon outcomes in terms of teacher behavior and student performance. The Study Group believes that such a model also holds promise for the professional development of principals.

In general, effective professional development is:

- Standards-based and systemic;
- Flexible—willing to respond quickly to new and evolving needs of principals and willing to utilize new technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness and cut costs;
- Focused upon effective practice or application that is based upon rigorous theory;
- Evaluated according to outcomes;
- Held accountable for bringing principals to high standards;
- Sufficiently flexible to address the individual learning needs of principals; and
- Focused upon three interrelated goals: principals' personal improvement, meeting school goals, and fostering principals' career growth.

State Policy Options: Building a Foundation for Quality through Principal Preparation and Professional Development

- *Include in the state's system of standards clear expectations for the outcomes of preparation and professional development programs.* States should ensure that programs are held accountable for the outcomes of the service they provide to principals.

- *Use accreditation to ensure that preparation programs meet high standards.* Preparation programs may be held accountable, via accreditation requirements that focus upon outcomes, for the performance of their graduates.

- *Allow diverse routes for principal preparation as long as they adhere to the same high standards as traditional preparation programs.* In a standards-based system, states may consider allowing principal preparation routes to vary in their structure, location, and length of study, provided that all preparation programs are held accountable for preparing high-quality principals.

- *Ensure that all new principals have access to high-quality induction that includes mentorship.* High-quality induction programs that include mentorships are proving to be an effective way to help novice principals learn about their job, their school, and their district.

- *Base principals' professional development upon the results of individual formative and summative evaluation that is based upon state standards and clearly defines the targeted educational needs of individual principals.* High-quality professional development that helps principals meet high standards needs to be based upon the specific needs of individual principals. As a result, states should consider implementing a system of standards-based evaluation that helps principals and the districts in which they work diagnose and remediate individual principal's gaps in knowledge and skills.

- *Evaluate systems of preparation and professional development to ensure they help principals meet state standards.* Just as principals need to be evaluated, states should devise ways to evaluate preparation and professional development programs to ensure they are of high quality and provide principals with the knowledge and skills they need to meet state standards.

V. Going Where the Jobs Are: Principal Distribution and the Politics of Equity

Principals as an Unevenly Divided Resource

Once prepared for the principalship, individuals apply for and accept leadership positions in patterns that shortchange some of the country's neediest students. Particularly in urban, rural, and high-poverty districts, high-quality principal candidates are scarce and getting more so. This is because there is little compelling reason for a principal to accept a position that pays less than others and that, on average, will probably be a more challenging place to work with fewer supports. While states and districts have begun to offer incentives to *teachers* to work in hard-to-serve schools, urban and high-poverty schools are still left largely on their own to attract high-quality principals.

Nowhere is the need to attract and retain high-quality leaders more urgent than in the nation's urban schools. Although urban schools enroll only 28 percent of all students, this population includes more than 40 percent of the nation's students who are not proficient in English, 75 percent of the nation's minority students, and 40 percent of the nation's students from low-income homes (CGCS, 1998). Urban schools also contend with the lowest levels of student achievement nationwide; the highest levels of student dropout; and a disproportionate percent of students with special needs. The disproportionate presence of poverty, low achievement, and students with special needs makes urban schools a key leverage point for improving equity and equality of educational opportunity.

Fundamentally, principals choose not to work in urban, high-poverty schools because the costs—in terms of income, conditions of career preparation and entry, and working conditions—outweigh the perceived benefits of working in urban schools. A key to recruiting and retaining high-quality principals for urban schools rests in comprehensive and coordinated efforts at improving this cost/benefit ratio.

Leading an urban school can be a tremendous challenge. Principals in urban and high-poverty schools find it difficult to attract qualified teaching staff and, once teachers are hired, have some of the lowest levels of teacher retention; in many urban schools chronic teacher shortages mean that year after year principals lead a staff comprised of substitutes, teachers with emergency certificates, and teachers struggling to teach classes for which they are not certified. Students in urban and high-poverty schools are more likely than any other student group to be living in single-parent families, the most likely to be racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, the most likely to be victimized by crime , and the least likely to finish high school (U.S. Department of Education, 1996; Louis Harris/MetLife, 1999). On almost every measure, urban principals report more problems than suburban principals (see Table 3).

Not only is the job challenging, but the rewards do not compare favorably with those found in nearby suburban schools:

- Even though the cost-of-living in urban areas is generally high, urban principals earn less than their suburban counterparts: in 1993-94, the average salary for a public school principal in suburbs or large towns was $61,810, compared to $58,023 for the average urban principal (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). In New York City, principals can earn as much as $30,000 more by leaving the city in favor of jobs in the suburbs (Olsen, 1999).

Table 3. Percent of Public Principals Who View Certain Issues as Serious Problems in Their Schools

	Elementary School		Secondary School	
	Central City	Suburban/Large Town	Central City	Suburban/Large Town
Poverty	26.1	10.6	21.6	8.4
Students come unprepared to learn	18.8	8.3	17.2	9.2
Lack of parent involvement	15.8	7.4	23.8	16.4
Student alcohol use	–	–	6.1	11.4
Parent alcohol/drug abuse	10.2	4.9	–	–
Student apathy	6.3	3.6	16.3	13.2

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (1997). *Public and Private School Principals in the United States: 1987-88 and 1993-94.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

- Beyond salary, urban principals generally have fewer supports than their suburban colleagues. The case of one Philadelphia principal illustrates this point: When she moved from a central city to a comparatively sized suburban school, she not only increased her salary significantly, she also moved from an 85 percent poverty rate among students to nine percent, from one assistant principal to three, from no instructional aides to about a dozen, from three secretaries to fourteen, from two counselors to six counselors and one psychologist, and from one part-time nurse to two nurses and a nurses' aide. The disparities in staffing parallel similar differences in resources, materials, and programs (Olsen, 1999).
- Principals in urban schools are less likely than suburban principals to receive comprehensive benefits packages (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

The Study Group believes that the laissez-faire system of distributing excellent principals potentially places high-risk, high-poverty students at even greater risk of failure. Particularly in states with high-stakes accountability for students, failing to provide students at risk with the finest in well-trained, high-quality school leaders has serious implications in terms of equity and equality of opportunity. Attracting a sizeable cadre of high-quality principals to work in urban and high-poverty schools is imperative. As a start, the Study Group believes that **states need to apply lessons learned about effective ways to attract teachers to urban and high-poverty schools as they build comprehensive systems to attract and retain high-quality principals for schools that find it a chronic challenge to hire excellent leadership.** Methods of attracting teachers to hard-to-staff schools include both targeted recruitment and training and incentive packages such as those discussed in Chapter 3.

It should be noted that, while some urban districts currently offer incentives to principals who accept positions, the Study Group believes that in states where standards and accountability are set by the state, states *must* offer incentives. Making the quality of leadership dependent upon a district's capacity to attract and retain high-quality principals places students and schools in jeopardy. In response to the inequitable distribution of high-quality principals across the state, Nevada provides pay incentives for five-year veterans in at-risk schools.

States can also distribute high-quality principals more equitably by undertaking targeted recruitment and training. Those working in the fields of teacher recruitment and preparation have found that strategically recruiting individuals from local communities and enrolling them in preparation programs that focus specifically upon the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in urban, high poverty schools are excellent strategies to attract candidates to the field who want to work in urban environments and who can succeed at doing so.

Not only does the content of preparation matter, but the location does. Among teacher recruiters, it is generally accepted that offering preparation programs in or near communities where shortages are most prevalent helps to fill positions in schools that need staff. Where local preparation programs also offer flexibility in course scheduling, offer credit for appropriate experience and pre-existing knowledge, and have funds available for work release and paid internships, the likelihood of attracting a large number of high-quality candidates rises even higher. In general, some teacher recruiters have taken very seriously the challenge of reducing barriers into the field. The Study Group believes that states need to review the location, content, flexibility, and financial resources available to entice candidates into principal preparation programs that most effectively prepare candidates to work in hard-to-staff schools. It is incumbent upon states to see that his happens; leaving it to local districts to solve their own recruitment problems fails to live up to the state's commitment to provide the resources necessary for all students to reach high standards.

Opening the Hiring Process

Equity applies not only to the opportunity for students to attend school with high-quality leadership but also to the opportunity for principals to compete in an open market for a position in which they can succeed. While standards-based systems require candidates to meet rigorous criteria, the fact of the matter is that traditionally the level of education leadership skills among principal candidates has often not been a widely applied criterion in hiring decisions. Instead of skills, knowledge, or dispositions, districts often rely upon subjective measures of a "good fit" that can include a candidate's values, physical size, and perceived stamina. In trying to hire a candidate with a "good fit," many superintendents subvert official job posting requirements to give themselves as much latitude as possible in hand-selecting the candidate (Smith and Piele, 1997). In situations such as these, the principal selection procedure is essentially closed, producing an applicant pool that is small and that contains applicants that do not vary considerably from other school leaders in the district (Baltzell and Dentler, 1983). Such a system also makes it hard for candidates from minority groups to receive appointments as principals.

While developing programs to "grow your own" principals is an important way to ensure districts have an adequate supply of candidates, the Study Group believes there is a fine line between that and cronyism. **Cronyism not only denies districts the opportunity of considering high-quality candidates from beyond their borders, but it brings into question the validity of the hiring process and discourages outside candidates from applying in the future.** Where hiring processes are open, apply clear criteria, and follow systematic processes, there is less evidence of cronyism, more diversity among candidates, and greater credibility in the process. Furthermore, open hiring processes "seem to ramify widely across other features of local school systems, raising levels of morale, improving the quality and efficiency of service, and upgrading the learning opportunities of students" (Batzell and Dentler, 1983).

Eradicating cronyism in principal hiring practices can be a costly and time consuming process, but the Study Group believes that **cronyism has no place in any sound hiring process**. Setting standards is an effective way to combat some of the immediate quality concerns that systems of cronyism encourage. Where rigorous statewide standards and closely aligned assessments guide who can enter the candidate

pool, truly unqualified candidates are unable to be licensed. Besides setting standards, however, the Study Group has found at least two other ways that policymakers can encourage districts to undertake a truly state or national search for principal candidates:

- Provide clear guidance and high-quality technical assistance to help districts broaden a candidate search. For the last 15 years, Rhode Island has provided training to local boards on how to hire objectively. Although time consuming, policymakers believe that providing local decision-makers with assistance and information has gone a long way toward eradicating widespread nepotism.

- States may consider establishing clearinghouses to advertise to districts the candidates available to fill vacant positions in the principalship. National principal associations such as NAESP and NASSP already operate clearinghouses that states can publicize. States can also work with the state principal associations to encourage a more aggressive statewide market of principal supply and demand.

State Policy Actions: Principal Distribution and the Politics of Equity

- ***Provide incentives to equalize districts' ability to attract high-quality candidates.*** Incentives such as signing bonuses, relocation expenses, tuition reimbursement, and extra years of service toward retirement may be effective ways that states can encourage principals to work in hard-to-staff schools.

- ***Support local recruitment strategies in hard-to-serve districts.*** Helping hard-to-serve districts recruit and train candidates locally may be one of the most effective ways that states can provide principals to districts that find it hard to recruit candidates.

- ***Provide guidance to districts on how to broaden candidate searches to include candidates from outside the district.*** Technical assistance to help districts search for candidates outside their borders may help districts find candidates that they otherwise would not.

- ***Establish a clearinghouse to match districts with candidates seeking jobs.*** States may encourage state-wide recruitment by publicizing vacancies and candidates in a central database.

VI. Principal Retention

Evidence clearly suggests that shortages of high-quality principals can be attributed in large part to the conditions under which principals work. In general, principals report that the time required to do the job and the levels of stress inherent in the job are not balanced with the level of compensation (see Table 4). As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to convince teachers to leave classroom positions of relative comfort and pursue positions in school leadership.

In order for policymakers to encourage individuals to enter and remain in the principalship, the job needs to be manageable and the benefits need to be apparent, particularly in comparison to the benefits of remaining in teaching. Building a profession in which the benefits outweigh the frustrations requires states to improve the support, services, and growth opportunities available to principals in order to encourage excellent principals to remain in the field. Previous sections in this report have already suggested several ways to improve the recruitment and preparation of principals so they are better prepared to meet their long list of responsibilities. This report has also suggested incentives to attract individuals to work in hard-to-staff schools. It is also important, however, that state policymakers redress the apparent imbalance between principals' responsibilities and their compensation in order to retain principals.

With most principals reporting frustration in their positions, improving principals' professional satisfaction needs to be a central component of any plan to resolve the principal shortage. **Because the frustrations associated with the principalship are many, addressing them requires *systemic strategic planning and action.* Policymakers must diminish the frustrations that discourage principals from remaining in the field, particularly in the nation's neediest schools, and increase the benefits, both perceived and real, of a job in the principalship.** Fundamentally, this requires policymakers to raise compensation, streamline principals' scope of work, balance accountability requirements with authority, and provide incentives for excellent performance.

Streamline Principals' Scope of Work. One of principals' most common concerns is the fractionalization and wide-spanning scope of their job, which, they report, takes them in so many directions in the course of a day that they find it impossible to address any single direction adequately. This fractionalization is in part because policies have been developed with little regard to the effect they have on the way principals allocate their time. Pulled in too many directions at once, the principals' job becomes one of managing immediate crises rather than developing vision and planning and implementing high-quality, targeted strategies to meet clearly articulated goals. Yet, increasingly principals are evaluated not on their ability to respond to crises, but their ability to lead a learning community toward long-term goals. The disjuncture between what principals need to do and what is expected of them renders their job more challenging.

Encourage Shared Leadership. While the Study Group supports reforms that move decision-making and accountability to the school level, it rejects the assumption that authority to devise and manage change rests solely with the principal. On the contrary, leadership models that distribute authority across schools and foster collaboration among teachers, students, support staff, and the larger community are more stable in the long-term than models that vest all authority in one person. As such, the Study Group recommends that states devise incentives that reward school communities for building distributive systems of management

Table 4. Percent of Superintendents Who Say Certain Factors Discourage Applicants to the Principalship

Factors	Percent of Respondents
Compensation insufficient compared to responsibilities	60
Too much time required	27
Job too stressful	32
Societal problems make it difficult to focus on instruction	13
Testing/accountability pressures	7
Difficult to satisfy parents/community	14
Fewer experienced teachers interested	12
Job viewed as less satisfying than previously	6
No tenure for position	1
Openings not well publicized	2
Would lose tenure as teacher	1
Bad press/PR problems for district	1

Source: Educational Research Service. (1998). *Is There a Shortage of Qualified Candidates for Openings in the Principalship?* Arlington, VA: Author.

and leadership that share responsibility for excellence across the staff. At a minimum, this means including in principals' evaluations a measure of their success at distributive management. Ideally, it means: 1) building into the entire system of principal, teacher, school, and district standards the expectation that leadership is a community job; and 2) including in the system of principal preparation, evaluation, and professional development the tools principals need to build effective models of distributive leadership in their schools.

Balance the need for accountability and job security. It takes at least five years for a leader to bring about significant change in an organization (Fullan and Steigelbauer, 1991). Understanding this, state and local boards need to ensure that principals have the job security they need to bring about long-term change. At a time when policymakers across the country are clamoring for systemic change, the current trend toward one-year contracts (and in some places contracts as short as 90 days) for principals is troubling. Providing principals with a three-year renewable contract, and some protection from removal before their contracts expire, seems the only reasonable way to align contractual agreements with policymakers' expectations that principals focus upon long-term, rather than immediate, school improvement goals.

Having said that, the Study Group believes that tenure is inconsistent with a system that takes accountability seriously. On the contrary, the litigious climate surrounding terminations under tenure may seriously deter districts from removing incompetent principals. Furthermore, principals themselves consistently rank tenure at the bottom of reasons why it is difficult to attract new candidates to the principalship (see Table 4), and principals report feeling relatively secure in their positions. A growing number of states seem to agree with the Study Group that tenure is unnecessary: currently tenure is granted to principals in only sixteen states, several states are currently reviewing their tenure policy, and even in states where principals can be given tenure, districts often require principals to waive their right to tenure in their contract.

Finally, in a system that balances accountability with job stability, the reasons districts remove principals need to correspond with the priorities of the accountability system. A survey in California revealed that, at least in that state, the most common reason principals lose their jobs is unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships, not failure to raise student achievement, manage effectively, or lead reform. Reasons dealing with personal and human relations comprised 68 percent of superintendents' responses. In other

The school district in Douglas County, Colorado, has devised a performance-pay scheme for principals that effectively takes into account multiple ways in which principals can demonstrate excellence. While student test score data is an important way in which principals can earn bonuses, they can also earn bonuses for other key activities.

Douglas County's performance pay program includes four key components: outstanding performance, skills blocks, group incentive, and district responsibility pay. Outstanding performance pay, which can be as much as $2,000, results from devising a plan to improve student performance and demonstrating success with hard data. Principals can also earn performance bonuses of up to $500 for completing courses, called skills blocks, and demonstrating that they are applying the knowledge and skills learned in these courses to their jobs. District responsibility pay of up to about $300 rewards principals for participating in special committees. Finally, group incentive pay encourages all school employees to work together on teams to improve student achievement. Upon presenting data to demonstrate student achievement, bonuses are awarded to all members of the team, which can include classified employees.

While the program has been successful and has met with general acceptance by teachers and administrators, its biggest impediment is the size of its bureaucracy. Using multiple strands of evidence requires considerable investment from the district in terms of time, effort, and money.

words, principals are losing their jobs not because they fail to get measurable results from students, but because they upset people. Yet evidence suggests that principals who are willing to make waves, stretch rules, and challenge authority are more effective than those who are not (Wynne and McPherson, 1983).

Ensure that Principals are Adequately Paid. Current payscales in many districts pay assistant principals and new principals little more than experienced teachers. As a result, practicing principals report that pay is a major disincentive to accepting the increased time and responsibility inherent in a principal position. The Study Group believes that while salary negotiations are a decidedly local affair, it is incumbent upon the state to ensure that every district has the resources necessary to pay a competitive wage to school leaders. In cases where economic disparities between neighboring districts seem to affect the equitable distribution of high-quality principals, states may consider a variety of interventions, including: targeted technical assistance to districts to help them finance salary increases among school leaders; targeted assistance to help districts prepare an incentive package, above and beyond salary, to compensate for salary differences with neighboring districts; targeted funds to increase the compensation to school leaders; and state funding of other non-monetary benefits for school principals, such as tuition reimbursements, professional development opportunities, and adequate staffing.

Consider Incentives for Excellence and Improvement. Employees across all fields appreciate having good work acknowledged. In the field of education, performance pay is now available in districts across the country, and in 1998 about 15 percent of elementary school principals were working under incentive- or performance-pay contracts (NAESP, 1998). The Study Group suggests that state policymakers consider ways to reward principals for excellence and improvement. These incentives can be either individual (paid directly to the principal) or school-based (paid into the general school fund). Although either type of incentive can be an important tool to reward principals, the Study Group suggests that school incentives, rather than individual, make the most sense in a system of distributive leadership.

Equitable implementation of financial incentives for high-quality performance, either individual- or school-based, depends upon states' ability to develop complex systems to measure success. Using a single test score, perhaps the most common measure of success, is undoubtably too restrictive a measure and fails to capture the myriad ways in which a principal can demonstrate

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success, such as improving parental involvement, reducing truancy, or learning and applying new skills. While devising multiple measures of principal and school performance is a fairer and more accurate way to evaluate performance, doing so can be costly. Furthermore, in cases where incentives are made available to individuals rather than schools, implementing performance pay for administrators may also require doing so for teachers who arguably must work alongside principals for meaningful school improvement to occur. Consequently, state policymakers need to consider the scope of costs associated with incentive programs prior to their implementation.

States or districts that implement performance-pay or other types of reward and sanction systems for individuals also need to keep in mind that the ability of principals to change student learning outcomes is limited by some extent by variables external to the school, such as students' social background. Estimates are that as little as 10 to 20 percent of differences in student performance are a direct result of school differences, and within that 10 to 20 percent, only a portion is attributable to the principal. Studies have varied in terms of the exact influence of principal quality on student performance, but even high estimates have asserted that only 8 percent of differences in student performance can be attributed to school leadership (Leithwood, 1999). What this means is that principals certainly can and do make a difference, but they are not the only factor that does. As models of distributive leadership clearly imply, principals work at the *center of a school community* that fosters achievement in students and teachers.

State Policy Options: Principal Retention

- ***Consider the effects of new policies on the scope of work for school principals.*** Often principals' responsibilities can accrete over time through state policies concerning curriculum, accountability, safety, discipline, and other policy areas that often affect principals. State boards should examine policies to ensure that the unanticipated effect of policies is not to render the job of the principal too complex.

- ***Encourage distributive leadership.*** Distributive leadership makes sense both because it reduces the direct responsibilities of school principals and because it fosters effective schools. State boards may consider providing incentives for schools to devise systems of distributive leadership.

- ***Encourage multi-year contracts and job security across contract years.*** Under accountability systems that increasingly require long-term systemic school change, state boards of education need to ensure that principals have sufficient job security to lead multi-year reform. Balanced against this job security, however, is the real need for principals to regularly demonstrate their ability to meet state knowledge and performance standards.

- ***Ensure that principals' compensation is adequate to attract and retain high-quality individuals to all schools.*** The single greatest concern among principals is the belief that compensation is insufficient compared to the responsibilities of the job. States should ensure that principals are compensated adequately and that all districts have the ability to attract and retain high-quality principals with competitive compensation packages.

- ***Consider incentives for excellent performance.*** States should consider ways to encourage excellence among schools and principals by providing financial incentives for high-quality performance as measured by multiple indicators.

Appendix A. The National Association of Elementary School Principals' *Proficiencies for Principals*

The National Association of Elementary School Principals has devised Proficiencies for Principals that provide guidance and direction for the preparation and professional development of K-8 school principals. The Proficiencies are based upon both research concerning effective principals and the experience of practicing administrators. What results is a set of proficiencies that describe leadership and management skills and behaviors that effective principals need to demonstrate.

Leadership Proficiencies. Effective principals are leaders of leaders who place as their highest priority the teaching and learning of students. They sustain a quality environment and act morally and ethically at every turn.

- **Leadership Behavior:** Proficient principals possess values, beliefs, and personal attributes that inspire others to achieve school goals, build a school environment that is marked by collegiality and common purpose, work collaboratively and innovatively, encourage shared decision-making, and recognize achievement among students and staff.
- **Communication Skills:** Proficient principals know how to project ideas and images, verbally, nonverbally, through technology, and in written communication. They also keep the school community informed about the school and interact with diverse groups of people with sensitivity and understanding.
- **Group Processes:** Proficient principals mobilize others to collaborate in solving problems and accomplishing school goals and capitalize upon the talents and expertise of others. They also understand the dynamics of change and effectively apply group process skills.
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** Proficient principals ensure that their school's curriculum is aligned with school goals, that it has been developed cooperatively, and that it is appropriately specific about knowledge, skills, values, habits, and attitudes that students should develop. They also seek support for the instructional program, ensure that instruction is appropriate and purposeful, and use staff expertise to promote a common core of learning.
- **Assessment:** Proficient principals monitor the school daily to ensure that program and service goals are being met. They also know the importance of evaluating student and staff performance, reinforce success and remediate failure, understand the sensitive nature of evaluation, and seek evaluation of their own performance.

Administrative/Management Proficiencies. Effective principals possess strong organizational skills, manage fiscal resources well, and are effective at dealing with political pressures.

- **Organizational Management:** Proficient principals work with members of the school community to set the school's organizational goals and priorities, manage a wide variety of tasks and responsibilities, participate in professional development, participate in reflective thinking, and are open to change.
- **Fiscal Management:** Proficient principals understand the relationship between school goals and the budgeting process, creatively find resources to support school programs, and project future needs.
- **Political Management:** Proficient principals deal effectively with forces outside of school, generate public support for the school, are involved in a variety of civic activities, and have a practical knowledge of local, state, and national political processes and their impact on the school.

Appendix B. The National Association of Secondary School Principals' *Skills for Principals*

Educational Leadership

- *Setting Instructional Direction:* Implementing strategies for improving teaching and learning, including putting programs and improvement efforts into action. Developing a vision and establishing clear goals; providing direction in achieving state goals; encouraging others to contribute to goal achievement; securing commitment to a course of action from individuals and groups.
- *Teamwork:* Seeking and encouraging involvement of team members. Modeling and encouraging the behaviors that move the group to task completion. Supporting group accomplishment.
- *Sensitivity:* Perceiving the needs and concerns of others; dealing tactfully with others in emotionally stressful situations or in conflict. Knowing what information to communicate and to whom. Relating to people of varying ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

Resolving Complex Problems

- *Judgement:* Reaching logical conclusions and making high-quality decisions based on available information. Giving priority and caution to significant issues. Seeking out relevant data, facts, and impressions. Analyzing and interpreting complex information.
- *Results Orientation:* Assuming responsibility. Recognizing when a decision is required. Taking prompt action as issues emerge. Resolving short-term issues while balancing them against long-term objectives.
- *Organizational Ability:* Planning and scheduling one's own and the work of others so that resources are used appropriately. Scheduling flow of activities; establishing procedures to monitor projects. Practicing time and task management; knowing what to delegate and to whom.

Communication

- *Oral Communication:* Clearly communicating. Making oral presentations that are clear and easy to understand.
- *Written Communication:* Expressing ideas clearly in writing; demonstrating technical proficiency. Writing appropriately for different audiences.

Developing Self and Others

- *Development of Others:* Teaching, coaching, and helping others. Providing specific feedback based on observations and data.
- *Understanding Own Strengths and Weaknesses:* Understanding personal strengths and weaknesses. Taking responsibility by actively pursuing developmental activities. Striving for continuous learning.

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ISBN 1-58434-042-8

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